THE PATRIOT MANIFESTO

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Patriots of all countries, unite!

I. POWER AND THE CAPTIVE CITIZEN

The history of the modern world can be read as the history of a power that has grown faster than humanity’s ability to control it. For centuries, power was visible: it had a throne, a palace, an army, and a name. People knew who demanded tribute from them, who imposed the law upon them, and who decided their fate. With the dissolution of the feudal world, trade expanded the cities, the cities raised the bourgeoisie, the bourgeoisie developed industry, and industry created the world market. From that world market gradually emerged global capital, and with it a world in which power could no longer be identified with the same ease.

Every great technological transformation has increased humanity’s capacity to produce, communicate, and move. The factory replaced the workshop, the machine multiplied the strength of human hands, railways and steamships

shortened distances, the telegraph brought markets closer together, electricity transformed production, the automobile and the airplane transformed mobility, the computer transformed information, the internet transformed communication, platforms transformed commerce, and algorithms began to transform decision-making. Artificial intelligence is carrying this transformation further, entering fields that until recently seemed reserved exclusively for human thought. Every stage has produced more power, more production, more speed, and more wealth. But not every stage has produced a comparable increase in human freedom.

Modern capital has acquired a mobility that people, families, and communities do not possess. A company can leave; the family remains. Investment can be moved; the community remains. Profit can be transferred; the consequences remain. A community may build roads, schools, universities, and generations of educated people, while capital may benefit from all of them and then leave when more favorable conditions appear elsewhere. The land does not leave. History does not leave. A community cannot be relocated according to the logic of return on investment.

Thus arose one of the great asymmetries of the contemporary world: **capital became global while responsibility remained local.**
The world market has created unprecedented prosperity. It has made possible products, services, and technologies that previous generations could scarcely have imagined. Yet that same world market has also created new forms of dependence. Governments compete for capital, cities for investment, businesses for access to markets, and workers with other workers who may live thousands of miles away. The classical relationship between worker and employer has been transformed into a far more complex relationship between the individual and an economic system in which ownership, decision, and consequence are not always located in the same place.

In the industrial world, people feared that the machine would take their work. In our world, the machine is no longer made only of steel. It analyzes, writes,

designs, calculates, recommends, selects, and increasingly participates in decisions. Artificial intelligence may become one of the greatest multipliers of productivity in human history. If a system can perform in one hour the work that once required ten people, society has become more productive. But if the additional value is concentrated only in the hands of those who own the system, while those displaced by it receive only insecurity, technological progress has not yet become social progress.

At the same time, the human being has become a source of informational raw material. Searches, purchases, movements, preferences, and time can be transformed into data; data into prediction; prediction into product; and product into profit. Whoever controls a factory may control the production of that factory. Whoever controls a platform may control access to a market. Whoever controls the infrastructure of information may influence what millions of people see. Whoever controls algorithms may influence what millions of people choose.

Contemporary power no longer resides in a single place. It is distributed among states, political parties, corporations, financial institutions, monopolies, technological platforms, information infrastructures, and supranational structures. The citizen votes, but not every power that shapes the citizen’s life stands for election.

Here emerges the social figure specific to our age: **the captive citizen**.
The captive citizen is not a person without rights. That is precisely the paradox. The captive citizen is legally free. He may vote, work, buy, sell, travel, communicate, change jobs, enter into contracts, and refuse. But the existence of a right does not always guarantee the actual power to exercise it.

The captive citizen is the person whose freedom is recognized by law, but whose material, political, or technological independence is not always sufficient to exercise that freedom fully.
He may leave a job, but he cannot do without income. He may refuse a loan, but may be unable to purchase a home without one. He may choose a platform, yet

may be unable to participate in a market without infrastructure controlled by that platform. He may vote for a political party, but he does not always control the selection of those among whom he is asked to choose. He may communicate freely, but the spaces through which he communicates often belong to powers he cannot control.

This is not the slavery of old societies. The captive citizen is not the legal property of another human being. His captivity is more subtle.

The slave lacked freedom. The captive citizen may lack the real power to use it.

Contemporary exploitation therefore cannot be reduced to low wages and hard labor. It may take the form of permanent debt, the inability to acquire property, precarious work, monopoly, dependence on platforms, concentration of capital, loss of control over one's time, or an inability to refuse without paying a disproportionate existential price. A person may earn more than his grandparents did and still feel that he controls less of his own life.

A highly paid professional may be a captive citizen. A small entrepreneur may be a captive citizen. A farmer may be a captive citizen. An employee may be a captive citizen. A family burdened by debt may be captive to conditions it is legally free to refuse but cannot always afford, materially, to reject.

The captive citizen therefore does not form an economic class in the old meaning of the term. He is the product of a **relationship of power**. On one side stands the one who can establish the conditions. On the other stands the person who, although legally free, possesses only a limited capacity to refuse them.

This is the central contradiction of our age: **concentrated power and the captive citizen.**

The problem of our time is not the absence of progress. The problem is that progress has created forms of power that our institutions have not yet sufficiently learned to limit, distribute, and make accountable to the people. A

free society cannot endure indefinitely when power increases while accountability diminishes.

It is from this contradiction that the politics of the Patriot Manifesto begins.

II. CAPTIVE CITIZENS AND PATRIOTS

Captive citizens do not become a political force merely because they live within relationships of dependence. As long as each person interprets his problem as exclusively personal, the structure of power remains untouched. The employee looks for another job, the family for another loan, the entrepreneur for another market, the community for another investor, and the citizen for another political party. Each attempts to find alone a way out of a situation whose rules he did not establish.

Change begins when separate experiences are recognized as expressions of the same problem. Lack of property, economic insecurity, monopoly, dependence on debt, the distance between voting and decision-making, the politicization of institutions, and the concentration of capital cease to appear as unrelated phenomena and reveal themselves as different forms of the same loss of autonomy.

At this point patriotism ceases to be merely a sentiment. It becomes political consciousness.

The patriot does not belong to a single class. He may be a worker or an entrepreneur, a farmer or a teacher, a doctor or an engineer, a civil servant or a researcher. He is not defined by his position within a class. He is defined by his relationship to power.

The patriot affirms that no form of power should become so concentrated that the freedom of others becomes permanently dependent upon it. Patriots do not seek to replace one ruling class with another. They do not ask the poor to

become masters over the rich, the worker to become master over the entrepreneur, or the state to become master over everyone.

The fundamental question is not who should become the new master.

The question is how we build a society in which no one can become master over others.

From this follows the question of property. We will be told that the redistribution of prosperity is an attack upon property. It is precisely the opposite. Communism saw the concentration of property and demanded its abolition.

The Patriot Manifesto sees the concentration of property and demands the multiplication of owners.

A society in which property is confiscated and concentrated in the state does not make people independent; it makes them dependent upon the state. A society in which property becomes concentrated among a limited number of owners does not make people independent either; it makes them dependent upon those who control capital. In both cases, the concentration of property produces the concentration of power.

The Patriot Manifesto does not seek to take property from those who possess it. It seeks to build an economy in which more and more of those who work, produce, save, take risks, innovate, and create value come to own property themselves. Work must not produce consumption alone. It must also be capable of producing property. Wages allow a person to live today; property increases his ability to say **no** tomorrow.

A home, savings, land, a workshop, an enterprise, capital, productive shares, and intellectual property are not merely economic goods. They are also forms of autonomy. Property must therefore be protected. But precisely because property creates autonomy, its concentration must be limited when it allows the owner to transform his own autonomy into power over the freedom of others.

The Patriot Manifesto does not demand equality of outcomes. People possess different talents, aspirations, disciplines, and willingness to work, initiate, and take risks. But the starting point must not become so decisive that merit can no longer overcome inheritance.

Freedom does not mean only the right to own property. It also means a genuine possibility of becoming an owner.

From this follows the role of education. Education must not be the institution through which one generation tells the young what to think, but the institution through which it teaches them how to think, how to understand the world, and how to transform their abilities into independence. It must produce intellectual independence through judgment, professional independence through competence, and civic independence through an understanding of power and institutions.

An education that produces credentials without competence does not liberate. An administration that rewards loyalty more than merit produces dependence. A society that demands competence from the person who builds a bridge, operates on a patient, or pilots an aircraft cannot regard competence as irrelevant when someone administers public resources or decides the laws under which millions of people live.

The greater the power, the higher the standard of competence must be.

The same principle must apply to politics. Political parties may organize opinions and interests. But they must not become the owners of representation. The citizen cannot remain sovereign only on election day and then see his power transferred to structures that control candidate selection, public careers, and access to institutions.

Parliament must represent society, not merely party apparatuses. Public office must not become a currency used to reward political loyalty. A mandate is not property. Office is not privilege. Authority is not a reward.

Power is temporary responsibility.

Our patriotism begins with the individual, continues through the community, and reaches the nation. The nation is not above the individual. The nation exists for the people who constitute it. Yet the isolated individual cannot defend freedom alone in a world where economic, technological, and political power is exercised on an enormous scale.

The sovereignty of the state does not guarantee the sovereignty of the citizen. If a distant authority is simply replaced by a nearby one, the captive citizen does not become free. Only the center of his captivity changes.

Sovereignty must therefore rise from the bottom upward: from the individual to the community and from the community to the nation. Each level must strengthen the one below it, not absorb it. What the individual can decide must not be confiscated by the community. What the community can decide must not be confiscated by the state. What the nation can decide must not be transferred to a more distant structure unless the nature of the problem requires it, and then only through mandate, limits, and accountability.

Economic transformation must follow the same principle. A market in which monopoly eliminates the possibility of competition ceases to be truly free. A state that controls everything ceases to be the guardian of freedom and becomes its owner. We do not want the monopoly of the state in place of the monopoly of capital. We do not want the monopoly of capital in place of the state.

Artificial intelligence and automation must increase the productivity of society, but their historic gain must not consist merely in lower costs for the owner of the technology. If society can produce more with less human labor, progress must also be capable of meaning more time, more security, more property, and more autonomy for the human being.

The captive citizen will not be liberated by destroying the economy that creates prosperity. He will become freer when prosperity enables him to become more independent.

That is why patriots seek:

Redistribution of power.
Redistribution of prosperity.
Multiplication of owners.
We do not want to change the masters.

We want a society that no longer needs masters.

III. THE OLD DOCTRINES AND THEIR LIMITS

The great political doctrines were born from the contradictions of their times. Liberalism fought hereditary privilege and absolute power. Socialism emerged from the contradictions of industrialization and the concentration of property. Communism identified the exploitation of labor and the accumulation of capital as sources of social domination. Nationalism transformed historical communities into political subjects and gave peoples the claim to self-determination.

Each of these doctrines captured a part of reality. Each became insufficient when it attempted to transform its part of the truth into a complete explanation of society.

Communism correctly identified that economic property can produce power and that a society in which wealth becomes excessively concentrated risks transforming formal freedom into real dependence. But its answer was the concentration of even greater power in the state. Property was taken from the private individual but was not distributed to the citizen. It was concentrated in a political structure the citizen could not control. An economic elite was replaced

by a political elite. The promise of liberation from domination created another form of domination.

Capitalism demonstrated the extraordinary capacity of private property, competition, and initiative to create wealth. It released energies that a centralized economy could not produce and made technological development possible at an unprecedented pace. But when the market is no longer defended against monopoly, when capital can purchase political influence, and when property becomes concentrated enough to determine the rules of competition, economic freedom begins to destroy its own conditions. The market then ceases to be a field of competition and becomes a mechanism for concentrating power.

Globalization expanded exchange, brought economies closer together, and made cooperation possible on an unprecedented scale. But capital, production, finance, and technology globalized faster than democratic accountability. From this difference emerged a new asymmetry: **the decision may be global, while the consequence remains local.**
Nor does nationalism alone provide the answer. A nation that regains the right to decide but preserves within itself the same forms of concentrated power does not automatically become a free society. A national government can transform the citizen into a captive citizen just as an economic power or a distant institution can.

Patriotism cannot be reduced to transferring power from outside to inside. **Power must also be redistributed within society.**
From this follows the distinction between patriotism and false patriotism. There is the patriotism of nostalgia, which believes salvation lies in returning to a vanished world. But the factory will not return to the workshop, the internet will not disappear, capital will not cease to circulate, and artificial intelligence cannot be uninvented. The Patriot Manifesto does not demand a return to the past. It demands the recovery of the principles of freedom within a new world.

There is the patriotism of the state, which confuses the power of government with the power of the nation. But a powerful state does not automatically mean a powerful citizen. If the power of the state grows while the power of the citizen declines, national sovereignty may conceal political captivity.

There is oligarchic patriotism, which condemns concentrated power when it lies outside the nation but accepts it when its holders are “our own.” Yet a monopoly does not become freedom because its owner speaks our language. An elite does not cease to be a dominant elite because it declares itself patriotic.

There is party patriotism, which attempts to confuse a political organization with the nation. No political party owns the nation. No electoral majority owns the people. A political opponent does not cease to be a citizen because he opposes the government.

There is symbolic patriotism, which gives society flags and speeches instead of property, merit, competence, and real power. Symbols matter. They transmit memory and belonging. But a person does not become freer because freedom is spoken of more often. A nation does not become more sovereign merely because it repeats its own name more often.

There is also the patriotism of conflict, which permanently requires an enemy. It explains internal failures through external threats and turns opposition into treason. The Patriot Manifesto does not need a people to hate in order to love its own nation.

The problems we describe do not arise from the identity of particular people. They arise from relationships between people and power. A monopoly may be domestic or foreign. A bureaucracy may be national or supranational. A corporation may have its headquarters next door or thousands of miles away. An elite may speak our language and still transform the citizen into a captive.

The criterion, therefore, is not the origin of power. The criterion is **how power is exercised**. Does it increase a person’s freedom or his dependence? Does it allow him to acquire property, or keep him permanently dependent upon others? Does it elevate competent people, or reward loyalty? Does it bring decision-making closer to the citizen, or move it further away? Does it allow power to be replaced, or transform power into the property of the person exercising it?
There is, finally, patriotism without transformation. It recognizes the symptoms of contemporary society but refuses to touch the structures that produce them. It wants prosperity without multiplying owners, merit without opening institutions to competence, democracy without reducing political monopoly, competition without limiting economic monopoly, sovereignty without redistributing power, and free citizens without changing the mechanisms that produce captive citizens.

But the effects of concentration cannot be eliminated while concentration itself remains intact.

It is not enough to demand better leaders. A free society cannot depend on the hope that power will always fall into the hands of good people. Institutions must be built so that bad, incompetent, or corrupt people cannot concentrate power without limits.

The Patriot Manifesto does not seek providential leaders.

It seeks institutions in which no leader can become providential.
It is not enough for the economy to grow. We must ask how many people become owners through that growth. It is not enough for the state to become more efficient. We must ask whether the citizen becomes freer in relation to it. It is not enough to modernize the political system. We must ask whether the individual acquires greater power over those who govern him.

The old doctrines too often asked: **Who should hold power?**

The Patriot Manifesto asks another question:

How do we prevent any power from turning the citizen into a captive?
Here begins the difference between the old doctrines and the Patriot Manifesto.

IV. PATRIOTS AND THE WORLD

A patriotism that demands freedom only for its own nation is not yet a universal principle. It becomes universal when it recognizes for others the same right it claims for itself.

The human being does not live in an abstraction. He is born into a language, a culture, a history, a territory, and a network of relationships that existed before him and will continue after him. The nation is not the property of one generation. It is the link between those who came before, those who are alive today, and those who will come after.

The Patriot Manifesto does not affirm that the nation stands above the individual. On the contrary: **the nation exists for people; people do not exist for the nation.**
But the isolated individual cannot be sovereign in a world in which economic, political, and technological power is exercised on an enormous scale. The individual needs communities capable of defending his freedom. Among them, the nation remains one of the few communities large enough to exercise power and close enough for that power to remain subject to public accountability.

Sovereignty is therefore not the privilege of government. Government does not own sovereignty. It is one of the instruments through which sovereignty is exercised. Sovereignty belongs to the citizens who constitute the political community.

A state may be formally sovereign and still be inhabited by captive citizens. An administration may speak in the name of the nation while concentrating decision-making in a limited number of hands. A party may claim to represent

the national interest while turning institutions into instruments of its own continuity.

State sovereignty is therefore not enough. **There must also be sovereignty of the citizen.**
The contemporary world is too interdependent for nations to live in isolation. Economics, technology, energy, information, security, and common problems cross borders. But the inevitability of interdependence does not mean that dependence must be accepted as destiny.

There is a fundamental difference between cooperation and submission. Cooperation presupposes parties capable both of deciding and of refusing.

Those who cannot say no are not fully cooperating; they are complying.
Patriots do not reject international cooperation. They do not reject common institutions. They do not reject exchange, markets, or the circulation of knowledge. But an institution created to serve cooperation must not become the owner of those who created it. Delegated power must not become confiscated power.

The same principle must apply to global capital. Freedom of exchange can create prosperity, specialization, and progress. But exchange ceases to be fully free when the difference in power between the participants becomes so great that one can impose the conditions upon the other. A company can move its capital. A community cannot move its history.

Patriots therefore do not demand closed markets. They demand the capacity of nations to participate in markets without losing their freedom to decide. They do not demand an end to capital. They demand accountability for the power created by capital. They do not demand isolation. They demand reciprocity.

Nor may sovereignty be used as a justification for domination over others. A nation that demands freedom for itself while denying the same freedom to another does not defend a principle. It defends a privilege.

A nation must be strong enough not to be dominated and responsible enough not to dominate.

Our patriotism is therefore not imperialism. But neither is it isolationism. We do not want a world without nations. Nor do we want a world in which every nation regards every other nation as a permanent adversary. We want cooperation among communities capable of choosing.

What we claim for ourselves must be recognized for others. What we refuse to have imposed upon us, we must not impose upon others.

In such an order, the patriot of one country is not the natural enemy of the patriot of another. On the contrary. If both demand freedom for their own people without claiming the right to dominate the other’s people, their principle is the same.

Here patriotism becomes universal. Not because nations disappear, but because their freedom becomes reciprocal. Not because differences between peoples are erased, but because those differences cease to justify domination. Not because people cease to love their own country, but because they understand that love of one’s country does not require hatred of another.

Patriots will support any political force that redistributes power toward citizens, broadens access to property, protects competition, elevates merit and competence, limits monopolies, and strengthens the freedom of communities to decide.

And they will oppose any political force, however patriotic it may proclaim itself to be, when it concentrates power, transforms institutions into party property,

monopolizes the economy, replaces competence with loyalty, or demands that citizens surrender their freedom in the name of a collective promise.

The Patriot Manifesto does not demand political uniformity. Pluralism is one of the ways in which power limits itself. A political opponent is not an enemy of the nation. A society in which the opposition can become the government and the government can become the opposition without violence is freer than one in which political victory is treated as the permanent conquest of the state.

The transformation we seek must be democratic, constitutional, and peaceful. An order that suspends freedom in order to promise freedom in the future defeats its own purpose. Power must be won through mandate and limited by law. Institutions must be transformed without destroying the rights of those who oppose that transformation. For the freedom we demand for ourselves must also belong to our opponents.

The Patriot Manifesto does not promise a world without differences, interests, or conflicts. It proposes a principle by which they must be organized:

No one must be allowed to transform wealth, office, party, monopoly, technology, or institution into a permanent right to determine the destiny of others.

We do not want the victory of one class over another. We do not want the victory of the state over the market. We do not want the victory of the market over the state. We do not want the victory of one nation over another.

We want a society in which power exists without becoming mastery, property exists without becoming domination, merit exists without becoming caste, the nation exists without becoming a prison for the individual, and cooperation exists without turning freedom into submission.

The citizen ceases to be captive when he acquires sufficient economic, political, and civic power for his rights to exist not merely on paper, but in real life.

Redistribution of power.
Redistribution of prosperity.
Multiplication of owners.
Strong nations. Free people. Cooperation among equals.
What we demand for ourselves, we recognize for others. What we refuse to have imposed upon us, we shall not impose upon others.

We do not want to change the masters.

We want a society that no longer needs masters.
And to all those who, regardless of the country in which they live, refuse to accept that freedom should exist only in law and not in real life, the Patriot Manifesto addresses its call:

PATRIOTS OF ALL COUNTRIES, UNITE!